Claims

We claim:

1. A brokerage account application method comprising the steps of:

receiving data from an Applicant,

forwarding said data to a credit bureau system for credit decisioning;

obtaining, in a real-time environment, a credit decision relating to said Applicant from said credit bureau system;

in response to a favorable credit decision, opening a brokerage account for said Applicant;

invoking a securities processing system to facilitate an activation of said account and use of said account.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of forwarding said data is accomplished utilizing a distributed credit bureau communication system.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein receiving data from an Applicant includes receiving data from an Applicant over a distributed network.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein said account is a brokerage account with a pre-established trading limit.

5. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of capturing data in an accounts database.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of formatting said captured data into a format acceptable by said credit bureau system.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the steps are performed in real-time.

8. The method of claim 2, wherein said step of invoking a securities processing system further includes facilitating communication with a trading system to obtain user-authentication information used for trading.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said user-authentication information comprises a username and password.

10. The method of claim 2, wherein said step of obtaining a credit decision from said credit bureau takes place in less than two minutes from when the information

was transmitted to the credit bureau.

11. A real-time brokerage account application method comprising the steps of:

providing an online brokerage application website;

electronically receiving brokerage application data from an Applicant over a distributed network;

capturing application data in a host system database;

formatting application data into a format accepted by a credit bureau;

forwarding said formatted application data, utilizing a distributed credit bureau communication system, to said credit bureau for real-time account decisioning;

receiving a credit decision from said credit bureau relating to said formatted application data;

invoking a securities processing system to open a brokerage account with a pre-established trading limit; wherein said securities processing system communicates with a trading system to activate said brokerage account.

12. An brokerage account application system comprising:

a web server system for communicating with an Applicant to post and receive, over a distributed network, account application data from said Applicant;

a distributed credit bureau communication system configured to accept account application data and communicate said application data to one or more credit bureaus.

a securities processing system configured to communicate with a trading system to activate a brokerage account, wherein said trading system, at the request of an Applicant, is able to place an order for a trade.

13. The brokerage application system of claim 11, further comprising an application server for processing said application data and interfacing with said credit bureau system, wherein said credit bureau system receives said application data and generates a credit decision and approval notification in response thereto.